



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Agenda

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager (860)441-6630

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter

Wednesday, November 05, 2008

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2008-0250 Proclamation Recognizing the 2008 Reunion of the 67th
and 5th Naval Seabee Battalions

Proclamation - TC

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

This is the portion of the Council Agenda where the Council welcomes comments from citizens. Each presentation should be limited to five (5) minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit written comments. Presentations should be related to matters pertinent to Groton. Town Councilors will only ask questions in order to clarify the speaker's presentation and can respond during the Responses to Citizens' Petitions portion of the Town Council meeting. Citizens should make their presentations from the lectern and state their names and addresses for the record.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed under Item VI (Consent Calendar) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion of these items will take place, unless cause is shown prior to the time Council votes on the motion to adopt.

a. Approval of Minutes

2008-0274 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

Resolution - Consent

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of October 21, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

b. Administrative Items

2008-0258 Special Trust Fund Contributions

Resolution - Consent

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

The Pride Committee at Fitch Senior High School - \$167.00 - Tercentennial Legacy Playground

Thomas Nahornik - \$200.00 - Maritime Academy Miscellaneous

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2008-0247 Budget Guidelines for FYE 2010

Referral

2008-0248 2009 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course

Referral

2008-0264 Revised State Grant - Tercentennial Legacy Playground

Referral

2008-0275	Appointment of Robin Moulding to Retirement Board	Resolution
2008-0246	Introduction of an Ordinance on Property Tax Relief	Referral
2008-0263	Resolution Setting Public Hearing on Ordinance on Property Tax Relief	Referral

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

- a. Town Councilors**
- b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting**
- c. Clerk of the Council**
- d. Town Manager**
- e. Town Attorney**

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy**
- b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond**
- c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski**
- d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets**
- e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt**
- f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne**
- g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter**
- h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro**
- i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson**

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

2008-0247	Budget Guidelines for FYE 2010	Referral
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RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING BUDGET GUIDELINES FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING (FYE) 2010

WHEREAS, the Town Council desires to provide guidance to the Town Manager for the preparation of budget estimates for accounts under his management, as well as to provide guidance to the Groton Board of Education, to the political subdivisions of the City of Groton and Groton Long Point, and to Outside Agencies, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, in his Proposed Budget for FYE 2010 is requested to present Town appropriations estimates of zero percent, one percent, two percent and three percent over the Approved Budget for FYE 2009, along with highlights to show program components and activity levels for the departments and functions, at each of the four levels of appropriations, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education, the City of Groton, Groton Long Point, and Outside Agencies are likewise requested to present budgets for FYE 2010 Town appropriations that provide for Town funding increases of zero percent, one percent, two percent and three percent over approved FYE 2009 appropriations, along with explanations of program components and activity

levels at each of the four levels of appropriations.

Legislative History

10/9/2008 Mayor Referred Town Council Committee of the

10/14/2008 Town Council Committee of the Whole Discussed

Councilor O'Beirne requested this referral. He feels that if the Council chooses to provide guidance, it should be now and not later in the process. Councilor O'Beirne feels that as elected officials, the Council owes it to the Town Manager and Board of Education to give them guidance on the Council's expectations. Discussion followed on the history and purpose for providing guidance versus direction, and the nature of the guidance to be given. Councilor O'Beirne would also like to provide guidance to Groton Long Point and the City of Groton. The consensus of the Committee was to provide some type of budget guidance and to place this item on the next agenda for discussion.

10/27/2008 Town Council Committee of the Whole Discussed

See City of Groton Committee of the Whole minutes of 10/27/08.

10/28/2008 Town Council Committee of the Whole Recommended for a Resolution

Councilor O'Beirne noted that everyone is aware of the financial challenges today and the Town can not expect any additional revenues. He suggested that the Council request a zero dollar increase budget and analyses of the "add-ons" for a 1% and a 2% increase. His proposal would not include the debt service. Councilor Streeter asked what the effect would be on contractual obligations. Councilor O'Beirne explained that his proposal would include labor contracts and may result in hiring freezes or employee reductions through attrition. Councilor O'Beirne would not support layoffs.

Councilor Monteiro would like to hear from the department heads what a zero dollar budget means in the way of cuts in addition to the exercise of identifying add-ons for a 1% and 2% increase. Councilor Kolnaski feels that issuing budget guidance is premature because cost increases for things such as utilities are unknown. She would, however, prefer to start with a 1% increase. Councilor Sheets supports the exercise and feels that starting early is valuable. She questioned the "baseline" figure for calculating the zero dollar increase and Councilor O'Beirne feels it should be the adopted budget figure, not anticipated expenditures. He further explained that the zero dollar increase would be across the board for Town Operations, not by individual department. Councilor O'Beirne feels that the Town Operations portion of the budget has a good history of returning money to the General Fund, unlike the Board of Education.

Councilor Schmidt suggested a 3% increase and feels that it is important not to tie the hands of government. Councilor O'Beirne feels that 3% is "business as usual" and does not take the current economic situation seriously. Councilor Schmidt clarified that she would like to see an analysis for 3% in addition to the 1% and 2% analyses, not a 3% increase.

Councilor Streeter feels that the CIP must be examined closely for cost saving opportunities.

The Town Manager provided an update on his efforts on the budget to date. Guidance from the Town Council is good, but it is not helpful to start at 0, 1, 2, or 3%. It would be more helpful for the Council to identify the things that they would like to eliminate. If the Town Manager and department heads proposed a zero dollar increase budget, there will be programs eliminated that the Council will not agree with. Despite what the public may think, the Town Manager does not propose eliminating services just to evoke a response. A zero dollar increase budget will result in the elimination of services so it would be more helpful to the Town Manager and department heads to have a discussion with the Council about which services the Council would like to eliminate. The Town Manager suggested starting with a level service budget and then identifying programs that the Council feels the Town can not afford.

The Town Manager has already talked to department heads about preliminary budget analyses and has asked major departments to go beyond a zero dollar increase into the negatives. Identifying a percentage cut is starting at the end and trying to work backwards. The Town Manager needs guidance identifying what programs or services the Council wants to eliminate because the types of reductions being discussed will not come about as a result of efficiencies.

Councilor O'Beirne does not think that Town Councilors know as much about department operations as the

Town Manager thinks. He suggested that the Council could spend a day with each department head to look at every aspect of their budget. Town Manager Oefinger then suggested asking the department heads what they think they need to serve the community and then use that as a baseline for discussions. The Town Manager is concerned that he will come in with a budget that includes a lot of cuts, but not every Councilor will be on the same page, and then a lot of time will be spent piecing the budget back together.

Councilor Sheets feels that the Town Manager's proposal is reasonable, but these are not ordinary times. She agrees that Town Council does not understand the budget well enough to comment. However, she would suggest suspending computer and vehicle replacement across the board as well as travel and conferences.

Councilor Kolnaski feels that the Town Manager, the Board of Education and others understand we are in difficult times and she supports the Town Manager's suggestion.

Councilor Streeter noted that the state is freezing things such as hiring and overtime. He is not convinced that the Board of Education would go along with any such guidance.

Councilor O'Beirne feels the Town Council should identify what the Town can afford before the budget is prepared. The Town Manager agreed that the Town Council's role is to identify what the Town can afford, but he is proposing a different way to get there and he would like to have concurrence among Town Councilors before the budget goes to the printer.

Councilor Monteiro stated she can live with budgets based on what the needs are with the stipulations that the department heads recognize the difficult times that the Town is facing, that the budget proposals include a list of things that could be cut, and that the proposals are developed well in advance of the deadline for the budget.

**10/28/2008 Town Council Committee of Motion
the Whole**

to give the Town Manager, the Board of Education, the City of Groton, and Groton Long Point budget guidance requesting zero dollar increase budgets with analyses of 1%, 2%, and 3% above that

2008-0248

2009 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course

Referral

RESOLUTION SETTING 2009 RATES FOR THE SHENNECOSSETT GOLF COURSE

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton's Shennecossett Golf Course operates as an enterprise fund, separate from the Town's general fund budget, and

WHEREAS, the Golf Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Commission have recommended a schedule of fees for calendar year 2009, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the municipal golf course rates for the year 2009 shall be the rates as attached to this resolution.

Legislative History

10/14/2008 Mayor Referred Town Council Committee of t

**10/28/2008 Town Council Committee of Discussed
the Whole**

Director of Parks and Recreation John Silsby noted that the rates for Shennecossett Golf Course are considered each year by the Golf Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Commission. He described the process and history for setting the rates. The Parks and Recreation Commission is recommending a 3% increase that would impact all of the rates at the golf course. The increase will position the golf course to cover anticipated budget increases. Mr. Silsby noted that Shennecossett had a very successful financial season with a positive fund balance. The goal is to build a 10% fund balance to act as a cushion for bad years.

Councilor Streeter asked if the public is made aware of the recommended increases prior to the Town Council's review. Tim Castleberry, Chairman of the Golf Advisory Board, noted that he interacts with many of the players and he looks for feedback on the proposed increases. In this case, it was all positive feedback. Golf Pro Todd Goodhue added that the Pro Shop tells players about the proposed increases and all of the feedback was positive and the increase was termed "understandable." Mr. Goodhue attributed the season's success to the condition of the golf course and the rates are less than the competition. Also, the golf course has been doing a lot of e-marketing.

- 10/28/2008 Town Council Committee of the Whole Recommended for a Resolution
- 2008-0264 Revised State Grant - Tercentennial Legacy Playground Referral

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FOR A TERCENTENNIAL LEGACY PLAYGROUND GRANT

RESOLVED, that Mark R. Oefinger, Town Manager of the Town of Groton, be and hereby is authorized to execute on behalf of this municipal corporation a Personal Services Agreement with the State of Connecticut for financial assistance in the amount of \$40,000 for the Tercentennial Park Playscape (CSAP 2008-24), and be it further

RESOLVED, that Mark R. Oefinger is hereby authorized to enter into such agreements, contracts and execute all documents necessary to said grant with the State of Connecticut.

BE IT FURTHER KNOWN that Mark R. Oefinger was appointed Town Manager. His term of office began on July 1, 2002 and continues to date. As the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the Town of Groton, and is duly authorized to enter into agreements and contracts on behalf of the Town of Groton.

Legislative History

10/21/2008 Mayor Referred Town Council Committee of the Whole

10/28/2008 Town Council Committee of the Whole Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger explained that the State of Connecticut made an error in the amount of the grant and it has been revised from \$50,000 to \$40,000.

- 10/28/2008 Town Council Committee of the Whole Recommended for a Resolution
- 2008-0275 Appointment of Robin Moulding to Retirement Board Resolution

RESOLUTION APPOINTING ROBIN MOULDING TO THE RETIREMENT BOARD

WHEREAS, the Town Charter, at Section 5.5, has established a Retirement Board of six members, appointed for three-year terms, and "entrusted with the management of the retirement system of the Town", and

WHEREAS, Robin Moulding has offered to serve as a participant member of the Board, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Town Council appoints Robin Moulding, 107 Haley Road, Mystic, to the Retirement Board, for a term ending 12/31/09.

Legislative History

10/28/2008 Town Council Recommended for a Resolution
Personnel/Appointments/Rules /Legislation Committee

- 2008-0246 Introduction of an Ordinance on Property Tax Relief Referral
- 2008-0263 Resolution Setting Public Hearing on Ordinance on Property Tax Relief Referral

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT